

Andrew Jackson to James Monroe, July 26, 1822, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

TO PRESIDENT MONROE.

Hermitage, July 26, 1822.

Dear Sir, Your letter of the 30th of May reached Nashville by due course of mail, being absent on a short Tour to my farm in alabama, I did not receive it untill late in June, and have been prevented by various causes (ill health included) from answering untill now.

Nothing could be more painfull to me, than to have cause to complain of the acts of one who I considered my friend. The principles upon which I have allways acted toward my friends, induced me to write to you with the candeur of one when the occurrence happened which induced the belief that the act was not only injurious but unfriendly to me, and not warrented from the facts of the case or the rules of general Justice to all. my letter to you was dictated by these considerations, and whether an injury has accrued to me by the communication as made to congress, as you now tell me and which I had allways believed that you are utterly incapable “of doing injustice to any one intentionally”, This suffices. The thing being done without intention of producing injury—if injury hath acrued, the intention being absent, no breach of friendship is, or can be ascribed with Justice.

I have seen with great regret the embarrasments, with which you are surrounded during last session of congress—some of which I anticipated from the moment I saw placed on the Register of the army the recommendation of the board of Genl officers. This I well knew would give to a certain party an opportunity to bring the army in review before congress, and if possible destroy its usefullness to the country by reducing it, and from

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matter growing out of this investigation, strike, if possible a blow at the rising popularity of the secretary of war. it was this view of the subject that induced me to write you from Pensacola with the freedom and candeur that I did. The indecorous phraseology of the report of the committee of the Senate, too plainly marked the intention of its promoters, and has destroyed that effect upon the public mind it was expected to produce, and must recoil upon the makers.

I have read with great attention and much interest your message to congress on the subject of the constitutional right to adopt, and execute a system of internal improvements.¹ Your reasoning I think Just, and the conclusions well drawn, and must be satisfactory to the nation. My opinion has allways been that the Federal goverment did not possess the constitutional right, that it was returned to the States,

¹ Message accompanying the veto of the Cumberland Road Bill, May 4, 1822.

My health is not good, nor have I much hope of regaining it, retirement and ease, may prolong my life, but I fear never can restore my broken constitution. Mrs J. requests to be kindly presented to you and Mrs Monroe and your family, to whom, I pray you, to present me respectfully—and believe me to [be] with great respect

your mo obdt, servt,